The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home

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The Skylark.

ENSKIED in cloudless calm this fresh May-morn,
High up in soaring ecstasy the lark,
A quivering speck of pulsing melody,
Brims all the azure vault with rapturous trills,
Thick-warbled coruscations of sweet sound,
And pours his little being into song
As if the summer day were still too short
For all he has to sing. Now, upward yet,
With joyous bounds, he mounts and mounts on wings
Of reckless freedom, till height dims his notes
To muffled softness, and the dazzling blue
Absorbs his form in light, like some rapt spirit
Which Heaven hides from earth. In praise to God,
Who made this world so fair, his life so glad,
His *Jubilate* rings. First treble, he
Leads up the many-voiced choir of earth,
Where spreads the sapphire semblance of the Throne,
With psalm invitatory of cheerful lands:—
"O come before his presence with a song."
So Love's full heart upon a morn like this,
Impatient of low flights and tardy strains,
Seeks larger utterance than mere words can give,
And flings tumultous song far into heaven.

A. SMYTHE PALMER.

Cordiality.

A SERMON BY EDWIN P. BARROW, M.A.

"As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man."—Prov. xxvii., 19.

What does cordiality exactly mean? And what is its value? Strictly speaking, it is not a virtue; nor is it one of the fruits of the spirit. We look for it in vain in codes and categories, moral or religious. And yet it has much to do with goodness, and not a little with happiness.

That which is cordial being that which proceeds from the heart, cordiality is heartiness. At the same time it is warmth of manner rather than depth of feeling. It is a kind of quick responsiveness, and this readiness to meet and be met is exactly described in the text: "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." If you bend over a clear stream, a face from the water answers your own. So, if two persons meet each other heartily, each for the moment reflects the heartiness of the other, and each leaves the other with a sense of pleasant exchange.

There are pleasing instances in the Old Testament of simple, unaffected cordiality. Such an instance is the meeting of Abraham's

servant with Rebekah. They are strangers to begin with, but they read one another's heart in a moment, and are friends. Abraham's talk with Ephron the Hittite about the burying place which he desired to buy from him—a friendly transaction as little like the driving of a bargain as it is possible for an act of buying and selling to be—is a beautiful example, not only of dignified politeness and delicate consideration, but also of the frankest trust and goodwill on both sides. Each vies with the other in generous assumption of nice feeling and honourable motive and natural scruple. Heart speaks to heart. There is also the touching scene of the leave-taking between King David and his old friend Barzillai. Each opens his heart to the other; there is no need for explanation; they understand and respect each other, and they part with a kiss and a blessing. Finest of all is the meeting of Boaz and his reapers: "Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee." Never did heartier greeting pass between master and men.

Cordiality is a quality in which, as a people, we are thought to be lacking. The Irish have it, the French also; Englishmen by comparison are cold and reserved. Southerners coming to the North sometimes complain of the bluffness and gruffness which they meet with. It may be that shyness and awkwardness have something to do with it; it may be also that warm-heartedness is so easily imitated, and the affectation of it so much less excusable than the want of it, that we prefer to err on the side of defect. To be effusive is, we think, to be insincere, and we would rather be restrained to the point of rudeness than be suspected, or suspect ourselves, of pretence. But one extreme is as unbecoming as the other, and there can be no question which gives more pain. Without any risk of unreality we might be much more friendly in manner than we are. Coming back from holiday excursions at this time of the year, we are pleasantly conscious of having made friends on all sides. We must even confess to ourselves that we have been more intimate with the friends of a day or two, the chance acquaintances whom we shall never probably meet again, than with those near neighbours whom we are constantly meeting at home. We cannot deny that with fellow-travellers and fellow-sojourners we made an effort to please, and to be pleased. Is there no affectation in this? Is it right that we should exert ourselves most for those who know us least?

Complaint is sometimes made of the lack of cordiality in Christian congregations. Here, if anywhere, the spirit of good fellowship should be found. Yet fellow-worshippers not infrequently avoid one another, or repeat year after year the same studied civilities, and these become at last a more painful barrier than silence itself, for silence may some day be broken, but guarded formalities are a warning that nothing more is to be expected.

The question remains whether cordiality can be acquired. There seems to be no reason why genuine heartiness, as distinct from artificial earnestness, should not be attained. It would be attained, like many other habits, by cultivation. Interest can undoubtedly be made. We make it for ouselves in time in connection with studies and occupations which once repelled us. Might it not be with persons as with things? Points of interest are quickly found when it is to our interest to find them. What is comradeship but acquired interest in those with whom we have to live—fellow members of club or college, profession or public service? We accept the situation, and make the best, and not the worst, both of others and of ourselves. Does not this prove that taste and liking are to some extent under our control?

The word cordiality may not be found in the New Testament, but the thing is there. "Moderation," or "gentleness"—sweet reasonableness—is the Gospel equivalent. Cordiality is the every-day play, the small change, of Charity. It gives in little ways a vast amount of pleasure. There is nothing for which we all hunger so much as recognition. Cordiality is recognition. And not only does it give a vast amount of pleasure; it does a vast amount of good. Face answereth to face, and heart to heart. In kindly recognition we see that reflection of ourselves which we desire to find, that approval which we are never quite able to give to ourselves. We meet with re-

sponse; an answer comes back to us; and, the more we are recognised, the more we are encouraged to do, and to be, our best. There is nothing so disheartening as stiffness and aloofness, whilst a warm-hearted word or look or gesture sends us on our way rejoicing. "He that sheweth mercy, let him shew it with cheerfulness." Without cheerfulness mercy can hardly be shewn, certainly cannot be gratefully received.

Finally, let it be remembered that the time is short. Coldness and moroseness grow upon us. There are excellent people on whose faces you rarely see an approving smile. Praise and welcome, and sympathy have been kept back as behind a cloud, and now the set expression will never change. It is in the sunny hours of early life that face answers to face; darkened waters take no image, and give none back. "Whilst we have time," says the Apostle, "let us do good to all men." Much of that good lies in bright and willing response to eyes which challenge our own.

The Grotesque in Religion.

THERE are many parables, tales, and legends connected with religion, and still popular in the Roman Catholic parts of Germany, Spain, and Ireland, from which the ordinary Protestant genius recoils in a kind of horror. Both his reverence and his taste are shocked by the grotesquerie of stories which combine freaks of very unhallowed fancy with genuinely religious ideas. A few illustrations may interest so many, or few, of our readers, as are blessed with a sense of humour.

An Irish legend relates how the Master, once walking with Peter, asked for admittance into a peasant's hut for the night, when they were most hospitably received. When leaving the next morning Peter, with that forwardness of initiative of which the Gospels give so many instances, urges his Master to reward the peasant's hospitality. "I think not; it is better as it is," was the reply. "It's a shame for you," says St.Payter,—the story is supposed to be told by an Irish peasant—"you *must* do something for him,"—an admirable dramatic touch, showing how well the character of Peter is understood, and how thoroughly it has been realised by the common people. Whereupon Jesus gives way, and tells his entertainer to look in a certain place, where he will find a piece of money. The next year our Lord and St. Peter return by the same spot, and find a grand castle in the place of the hut. They ask for a night's lodging, telling that they are the same travellers who received it a year ago, but the powdered footman comes back with a sharp refusal, saying the place is no hotel, and slams the door in their face, whereupon, after a brief silence, "says our Lord to St. Payter, '*I tould you so.*'" Both the unconscious and the conscious elements of humour in this story are very conspicuous. The dictatorial urgency of St. Peter's impulsiveness, and the childlike triumph of the retort with which the Divine Master impresses his superior wisdom on the blundering Apostle, are curious enough instances of the colloquial familiarity with which religious ideas are treated in popular legends of this class. Grimm's tales contain plenty of much more startling instances. For example, there is a story of a tailor let into Heaven by the easy good-nature of St. Peter, who, while the Lord and all His angels are gone out walking, climbs on to the golden throne, whence he can see all that happens upon earth, and discovers a washerwoman in the very act of stealing a veil entrusted to her to wash, whereupon, in his righteous indignation, he flings the golden footstool at the wretched thief. On the Lord's return, he misses the golden footstool, and interrogates St. Peter as to whom he has admitted, when the tailor is accused, and compelled to confess what he had done,—receiving the curiously quaint and yet solemn reply, "O thou rogue! were I to judge as thou judgest, what would have become of thee long before this? Long before this I should have had no seats, benches, chairs, nay, not even any toasting-forks left here, but should have thrown every one of them down at sinners. Here shall no one punish, but I alone, the Lord." Still more startling in its apparent deliberate tenderness for devil-may-carish good-nature and daring, is the story of Brother Lustig (Brother 'Merry,' to translate his name into English), who makes friends with St. Peter, abuses his

friendship in all sorts of unscrupulous and profane ways, and at length disgusts St. Peter so much that the Apostle declines his further company, bestowing upon him, however, at parting, a magical knapsack, into which anything that the owner wishes for is immediately conveyed. This the Apostle gives him professedly to remove all motive for breaking the Commandments,—rather shortsightedly, however, as the scapegrace uses it to rob people of their property as well as for more refined purposes. The most humorous use, however, which he makes of the knapsack is to render it subservient to his salvation. He offers to sleep in a house haunted by nine devils, who always torture and kill anyone who ventures to sleep there. Brother Lustig, quite undismayed at their diabolic dance round him, wishes them all into his knapsack, and then takes it straight to a blacksmith's, telling him to hammer away at it with all his might, which he does in spite of the shrieks of the imprisoned devils, and when he opens the knapsack eight are dead, but one which has got into a fold of the knapsack scuttles away to hell. At length as he grows old, Brother Lustig begins to think about his own state, and consults a hermit, who tells him there are two ways he can go,—one broad and pleasant to Hell, and one narrow and rough to Heaven. "I must be a fool," thinks Brother Lustig, "if I were to take the narrow and rough road," so he goes straight off to hell and asks for admission. Luckily for him, however, the little sentinel at the gate is the very devil which had escaped from his knapsack. He rushes off to the highest authority, saying, "There is a soldier at the gate with a wonderful knapsack, but at no price let him in, or else he will wish the whole of hell into his knapsack. He once gave me the nastiest possible hammering in it." Thereupon Brother Lustig is refused entrance into hell, whereupon he says very composedly that he has no choice but to try the other alternative, "for somewhere or other," he remarks, "I must stay." At the gate of heaven he finds St. Peter, who refuses him admittance, whereupon the sly fellow, with an air of hurt feeling, insists on returning the knapsack, for he will not keep a present at all from an acquaintance who is so little inclined to befriend him. St. Peter takes back the knapsack; Brother Lustig wishes himself into it, and so outmanœuvres the saint, and takes the kingdom of Heaven not indeed by force, but by craft. We could multiply these illustrations of the reckless use and abuse of grotesque humour in mediæval religious legends almost to any extent. But these illustrations will be sufficient for our purpose, which is simply to ask how far the habit of familiar and even grotesque illustration of religious creeds has a genuinely anti-religious tendency, how far it may be possible that Protestants, in preferring to treat the whole range of this subject with so sedulous a reserve and awe, have lost power while gaining dignity. Roman Catholics, we are all aware, assert that it is the unreality of Protestantism, its habit of half-shutting its eyes in order to give a fictitious mystery to religious objects, its fear of realising the *whole* of what is involved in any faith, its preference for mere visionary studies to that realisation of religious objects which enables us to "walk round them," as Dr. Newman says, which alone cause its horror of this familiar and sometimes humorous treatment of the apostles and saints, and not unfrequently even of our Lord Himself, so common in Roman Catholic countries and Roman Catholic ages.

The question seems to us to be really one between the advantage of vividness in religion, and of that reserve which expresses not so much reverence as the fear of alloying divine truth by human imperfections. No one can question that such stories as the Irish one we have quoted above, do add greatly to the vivacity with which the people conceive religious persons and religious themes. The reserve of our Lord in offering what He knew to be prejudicial, St. Peter's generous rashness in insisting upon the gift, the apparent yielding even of the divine mind to human importunity—though in this case badly illustrated, because illustrated at the moral expense not of St. Peter, who was thus importunate, but of the poor man who was not—and the issue showing that no reward would have been the best reward, must all tend greatly to increase the vividness with

which the peasantry among whom such tales are current, conceive the reserve of Providence, the historical character of the chief apostle and his relations with his Master, the meaning of our Lord's many lessons in favour of convincing by *not* resisting, and the "uses of adversity." Nor, in such a case as this, does there seem to us much to balance against the advantage, in the apparent injustice to the moral victim of St. Peter's generosity, who is kept in the background, or in the rather humorous version of our Lord's argumentative triumph over His disciple as expressed by, 'I tould you so.' Again in the less reverent tale of the tailor in heaven, the ludicrous grotesqueness of the whole conception does not seem to us nearly to balance the value of the vivid practical lesson. No peasantry in the world would be so ignorant as to treat the incident of the footstool as anything but a vivacious image. And the lesson itself, that human judgments are sure to be violent and impatient, and conceived on a plan quite irreconcilable with the slow methods of Providence, is so vividly expressed, that we do not think the seeming irreverence of the story is nearly so great as its genuine reverence.

We must remember that in all genuinely religious views of life grotesque elements are inevitable. The Jews did not see the grotesqueness apparent to us in saying, "By the help of my God I have leaped over a wall," or "He delighted not in any man's legs," any more than they saw the grotesqueness of the symbolic actions by which the prophets often illustrated the substance of their prophecy. And in point of fact, unless we are to realise that a man who is killed by being tripped up by his legs—as the angel in the story is said to have tripped up the false guide—is just as much killed by the Providence of God as if he had been struck by a thunderbolt, or fallen dead without any visible agency, we must cut the greater part of life out of the reach of Providential superintendence altogether. It is a part of mere dreamy idealism to fancy, as many of us do, that a stroke of apoplexy is more "the visitation of God," than what is called accidental death, as when a man falls into a soap-vat, or is ground to pieces by his own grinding-mill. The grotesque side of such legends is good so far as it helps us to realise that the ludicrous aspect of some of the incidents of life has no right whatever to cast doubt on the Providential meaning of them, so far as we can ever decipher such meaning. Wherever, then, the vivacity of religious conceptions is increased *without* their depth and awfulness being diminished, and so far as we are brought clearly to face the fact that what God orders may just as well have what we please to call grotesque effects in it as the most purely human events, these stories have a real use, and do assist us to see more vividly parts of God's meaning, and the irrelevancy of our capricious laughter to the question of divine purpose.

But directly the familiarity with religious objects and persons passes this stage, and begins to familiarise the people with the conception that saints and apostles may use their divine powers perfectly arbitrarily and even with jocular indifference to the moral result, there can be little doubt, we think, that mischief is really beginning. No doubt, Roman Catholics will say, and do say, that many of the ways which seem to us so shocking in Catholic countries, the threats to beat the images of the saints and the Madonna if they won't grant the peasants their wishes, are no more than children's pretences of familiar petulance with their parents—jokes which only a stranger could misconstrue. Very likely; but is it possible for popular literature to make so much fun of divine gifts and powers as the story of Brother Lustig does of St. Peter's, for instance—by making the apostolic dispenser of miraculous power so completely the dupe of a careless scapegrace—without infusing a feeling of irreverence and contempt which must survive the familiarity and the laughter? No doubt it is exceedingly easy to exaggerate this danger, for among the most religious of Protestants are to be found those who never yet pursed up their lips and tried to look prim at a ridiculous collocation of worldly and religious ideas, and there is no reason why the same should not be true of Catholics. Still, it is certainly

possible, and we should think by no means difficult, after realising distinctly certain great historical figures in the history of revelation, so to rub off all the atmosphere of religious awe connected with them, as that they shall fail to record the great cycle of truths connected with their teaching; and when once this has happened far more has been done in the anti-religious direction than could ever be effected by the unreal and timid reserve which Roman Catholics charge upon Protestants.

Astronomical Notes for Sept.

A CONSPICUOUS object in the sky this month is the planet Saturn, which passes the south, during the greater part of the month, between 10 and 11 o'clock. This planet, which is the most distant, and the second in size of those known to the ancients, is so far away from the sun that it takes nearly thirty years to make one revolution, so that he remains about two years and a half in each constellation of the Zodiac. In this respect he is a great contrast to Mars, which in July, was in the constellation of Libra, and before the end of the year will have progressed through Scorpio, Sagittarius, and Capricornus, and reached Aquarius. Mars, which has much decreased in brightness since May, sets a little before 9 o'clock at the end of September. Jupiter is also visible late at night.

The true moment at which to call upon one's self to take any new step in virtue is at the fainting-point, when it would be so easy to drop all and give all up; when, if you do not, you make of yourself a power.—*J. F. W. Ware.*

We are farthest away from God when we cannot perceive him in our fellow-beings. The mirror of human nature is sadly blurred; but in the meanest and wickedest there are tokens of the divine childhood, occasional flashes of the Father's image through innumerable distortions. It is for us to show a clear reflection of his life in our own lives before we judge others.—*Lucy Larcom.*

Silence Gives Consent.

Proverbs are the small language coin of all nations, but they are not all pure metal. Some have a larger proportion of alloy than others, but nearly all contain more or less in the admixture of wit and wisdom. It is not true that silence always gives consent, as frequently it signifies an inward smothered protest, a quiet but dangerous resistance to acts and principles proclaimed or reiterated.

It is perhaps the most significant mode of exhibiting dissent. The ominous silence of bodies of men brooding over wrong or stung by injustice is a sign more potent than violent outcries and denunciations. Unpopular rulers see in this sign the presence of concealed enmity that may soon break forth in overt acts of violence and rebellion. Therefore in a very real sense silence does not give consent, but accents opposition in a manner sinister and unmistakable.

Still from another point of view the old proverb is true enough. Silence, though not signifying approbation, may at least indicate a passive and unheroic attitude of mind just as pernicious as open approval. It is the cowardly refuge of the weak, timid, and time-serving, permissive of a thousand injuries that a brave attitude and outspoken courage might help to abolish. Under this conspiracy of silence, this bond of union acknowledged but unexpressed, thieves and robbers of all descriptions, political, predatory, and social, take refuge. The dark secret web of wrong and outrage is woven. Laws are defied or circumvented, officials are bribed, corruption spreads and penetrates public and private life, and the best institutions are not proof against the stealthy creeping evil that corrodes society.

From this point of view silence does give consent to moral blight that proper courage and resistance might have checked, until the community is honeycombed by its slimy influence. Silence may therefore become as sinful and pernicious as deeds of violence, may bind a town, a city, or a State in a conspiracy intangible, hard to reach, but very real in its baleful effects.

It is, therefore, well to consider how much harm we may do by keeping still when a brave attack on the prince of the powers of the air is demanded of every one whose moral sense is not drugged or blighted by selfish considerations. Thus, when the taint spreads, public opinion becomes valueless and impotent, and an open field is left to the exploiters of men's lower passions and aims.

Silence is a screen behind which weak natures hide, feeling that, if they shut their eyes to what is going on, they are not personally responsible. They are passive instruments of wrong by the consent of dumbness; and, sitting snug and warm at home, the world may go to perdition for all them, if so it must.

Society needs courage in large quantities. What has been accomplished for the good of humanity has come largely through this noble impulse of daring for the right. The world has thousands of trucklers and time-servers to one really brave soul. Society would ignore convictions, but God demands a true, strong word. If we have a conviction burning in us, let us not be ashamed or afraid to utter it. It may meet with frowns and averted looks, but it will still go straight to the mark. A moral shock is a form of conversion. Like the electric current it prints a truth on the heart. Let us have less worship of success and more of moral truth and dignity. Let us be among those who do not bow the knee to Baal.

In religion the brave word, the frank avowal, the honest proclamation of unpopular or unfashionable principles, is demanded. The members of a little sect whose aims and ideals are often misunderstood, who may have excited the animosity of the prejudiced and the ignorant, have the opportunity of manifesting a noble, outspoken courage. They are under obligation to show the truth that is in them, to reveal the grounds of faith, to dissipate the darkness of minds that view them through a mist of suspicion and distrust.

It is not only a privilege, it is a duty to be outspoken as to the things they believe and the things they reject. They have no right to shelter themselves under a cloud of silence, as if ashamed of the grand and humanizing principles of their faith. It is a sacred duty to show their colours, not aggressively, not offensively, but with the power and insistence of conviction. If people are in error as to what we believe, have we not a call to dissipate that error as far as in us lies, to show how noble a structure is the temple of our religion, how beautiful and simple its rites? We are here to spread truth as far as we can, and to disseminate light. How can we shelter ourselves from merited reproach if we neglect this sacred duty?

A Recusant.

THE Church stands there beyond the orchard-blooms;
How yearningly I gaze upon its spire!
Lifted mysterious through the twilight glooms,
Dissolving in the sunset's golden fire,
Or dim as slender incense morn by morn
Ascending to the blue and open sky.
For ever when my heart feels most forlorn
It murmurs to me with a weary sigh,
How sweet to enter in, to kneel and pray
With all the others whom we love so well!
All disbelief and doubt might pass away,
All peace float to us with its Sabbath bell.
Conscience replies, There is but one good rest,
Whose head is pillowed upon Truth's pure breast.

JAMES THOMSON.

It is true that love cannot be forced, that it cannot be made to order, that we cannot love because we ought or even because we want. But we can bring ourselves into the presence of the lovable. We can enter into friendship through the door of discipleship. We can learn love through service.—*Hugh Black.*

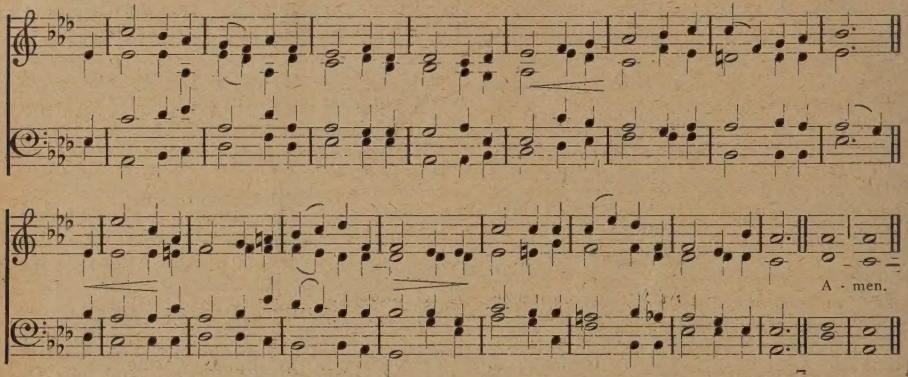
Saints for heaven, but for earth, heroes.—*Hardy.*

We are too apt to suffer the mean things of life to overgrow the finer nature within us, therefore it is expedient that at least once a day we read a little poetry or sing a song or look at a picture.—*Goethe.*

"How Calmly the Evening."

(From "The New Hymnal.")

Gloaming. 12.11.12.11. FERRIS TOZER, Mus. Doc.



1 How calmly the evening once more is descending,
As kind as a promise, as still as a prayer;
O wing of the Lord, in Thy shelter befriending [share!
May we and our households continue to

2 The sky, like the kingdom of heaven, is open!
O enter, my soul, at the glorious gates;
The silence and smile of His love are the token,
Who now for all comers invitingly waits.

3 We come to be soothed with His merciful healing; [of the day;
The dews of the night cure the wounds
We come, our life's work and its brevity feeling, [we pray.
With thanks for the past, for the future

4 Lord, save us from folly; be with us in sorrow; [rest;
Sustain us in work till the time of our
When earth's day is over, may heaven's tomorrow [best.
Dawn on us, of homes long expected the

T. T. LYNCH.

Notes and Jottings.

The great holiday season is with us, and will too soon be spent. It would be interesting to shew how holy-days degenerated into holidays, having pierrots for priests. It would be still more interesting to suggest how holidays may be re-converted into holy-days. The men of old who (so to speak) discovered Religion, must have been a people of endless leisure. In the spacious hours of a golden day they clung resolutely with their backs to the bottom of this green globe, and hung speculatively over the abyss of the sky interrogating its deep pool of mystery. Or perhaps they sat patriarchally at the door of their tents, and stayed far into the purple night to watch the moon and the stars and the face of the heavens, and to throb inwardly to the thunderous silence of the desert. These were the primæval mystics who first greatly guessed the meaning of the universe and gave their guess a Holy Name.

Before Religion can speak to us with the same directness and awe we also must reserve for ourselves an uninvaded leisure, if possible an inviolate solitude, and fill it with profound reveries wherein we may taste again the

savour of elemental things. Our retreat from conventions must become an advance into truth. The Alps clothed in the immaculate whiteness of eternal snow and seeming an externally embodied sanctity must raise within the soul heights, exaltations, purities; and spread a vast expanse of stillness and of prayer. The sea must chant for us the ancient rapturous song of the beginning of the world. Meadows and orchards must tell of the motherly tenderness at the heart of life. And when we return each to his station and its duties, we must bear with us the memory of what we have seen and heard, and felt, so that we may say—

'Ye have left
Your beauty with me, a serene accord
Of forms and colours, passive, yet endowed
In their submissiveness with power as sweet
And gracious, almost might I dare to say,
As virtue is, or goodness; sweet as love,
Or the remembrance of a generous deed
Or mildest visitations of pure thought,
When God, the giver of all joy, is thanked
Religiously, in silent blessedness;
Sweet as this last herself, for such it is!'

An extremely interesting article by Prof. Henry Jones appeared as the "causerie of the week," in the *Speaker* for August 12th. He writes cordially of Professor Carpenter's Biography of James Martineau, and expresses his undisguised admiration for our great leader's conception of religion as "independent of all sectarian distinctions." It is refreshing in these days when sectarianism is becoming aggressive to come across so hearty an appreciation of Martineau's efforts after "Free Christian Union." The cause and the champion appeal to Prof. Jones, who says:—"This great and generous conception had come to the member of a sect that is among the smallest, partly because it is a protest against sectarianism—to 'a martyr of obscure circumstances, exiled in the rarity of his own mind.' One is tempted to ask, what if it had come to a bench of bishops, and, if conceivable, lodged amidst equal powers of mind and will? But

'Such championship
Of God at first blush, such prompt cheery thud
Of glove on ground that answers ringingly
The challenge of the false knight, watch we long
And wait we vainly for its gallant like
From those appointed to the service, sworn
His body-guard with pay and privilege.'"

Exiled in the rarity of his own mind! If Martineau had blown the bugles of a sectarian campaign he would doubtless have enrolled an effective army and won a shabby victory. He worked for more catholic and enduring ends, and there is already evidence that he did not work in vain. The ideal of a Free Christianity is even now beginning to produce a literature. In the "Heart of the Empire," Mr. Head, in the name not merely of liberty but of honesty, pleaded strongly for reform in the matter of creed-subscription. Mr. Bremmer recently published a book on "The Pilgrimage from Theology to Religion," and now Dr. John Hunter has issued a powerful volume entitled "The Coming Church—A Plea for a Church simply Christian." It is a noble reproduction in modern phrase and accent of Dr. John Taylor's (of Norwich) exhortation: "Give your catholicism its proper worth by improving in sound knowledge, and guard it with resolution: reject all slavish, narrow principles with disdain; neither list yourselves nor be prest into the service of any sect or party whatsoever: Be *only Christians* and follow God and truth." In the midst of our sectarianisms this is still the reconciling word. The Trinitarian controversy may be left to the little-minded; but those who follow Martineau will unite on Free Christianity.

An interesting survival of the persecuting spirit exhibits itself in the *Times* in a letter from Prebendary Berdmore Compton, who says that the one motive of those Churchmen who are now clamouring against the Athanasian Creed is "a desire to ignore the glory of God in the punishment of the faithless." "This," he adds, deliciously, "is a part of the Christian's hope of glory." Far be it from us to rob the meekest Christian alive of his "hope of glory," but with regard to this succulent part of it we must confess to a sympathy with the Church dignitary who stigma-

tised it as a "blasphemy" and said that to him Atheism was far preferable. Another writer in more facetious mood reminds us that it was "the stern Tertullian" who revelled in a foretaste of the enjoyment he expected to derive in a future state of bliss from witnessing the torments of the damned. "Yet Tertullian, apart from questions of taste, is not a safe guide in matters of faith, since he became a Montanist; and it would be a curious case of irony if it should turn out that Prebendary Compton's affection for the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed was founded upon a heresy." But perhaps Prebendary Compton is prepared for the extreme test, and would gladly furnish himself as an example if only some poor Christian's "hope of Glory," and "the glory of God in the punishment of the faithless" are thereby subserved.

An attempt is about to be made to awaken in our congregations a corporate sense of responsibility for the social conditions of the people. In Manchester the matter has already been discussed, and it will shortly be brought before the North Midland and other Associations. Doubtless the cry of "No Politics" will be raised, but this cry, if we notice carefully the source of it, is itself the expression of a very definite school of politicians, who must not be allowed to paralyse the social witness and effort of our Churches. There are great national and humanitarian questions that can be easily and naturally approached on a level far above the agitated atmosphere of party-politics, and the congregation that is too timid to face such questions in a frank straightforward temper, must be prepared to be trampled under foot by the "larger march of human destinies" as salt that has lost its savour. It is well to be of one mind with the brethren, and we must beware of rending our congregations in twain with political passions. But sane earnest people, not blinded by the exigencies of their party, ought surely to be able to confer calmly on the public welfare, and act unitedly and strenuously on behalf of the common good. What mean we by all this talk about the Kingdom of God? This—at least—the Sovereignty of Righteousness expressing itself in social justice and in the love of man. The present Government has already been forced to recognise the urgency of the question of the unemployed, and we shall hear more of this in the coming winter. Something more drastic and thorough is needed than the mild philanthropy which will do everything for the poor except get off their backs. Our churches are the most progressive in things theological, may they not earn for themselves the distinction of being the most progressive in things social?

The Astronomer's Moon.—A Dead World.

Oh, Moon! delight of lovers! canst thou be
The dreary desert science says of thee?—
A life of fire gone out, a world whose breath
Hath giv'n its quick'ning atmosphere to death?

Oh, Moon! delight of lovers! canst thou be
No more the light of poet's phantasy?
An agonized heap of twisted rock,—
A death-carv'd, cinder'd, monumental block!

No more our symbol of inconstancy,—
Waxing and waning—spiritually free,—
Thy heights, cloud-widow'd, feel no fertile rains,
And voiceless caverns seam corroded plains.

Art thou, our Moon, a gleaming, cold, dead face,
A spectre warning constellated space?
Then lunar frenzy may be sympathy,
Of spirits troubled in their agony.

By pity moved, obedient seas swell high
To moist thy dry lips, while the sad winds sigh,
And in thy beatless heart Earth feels her doom,
Her greater light the measure of her tomb.

Oh, fair ethereal ruler of our night!
Companion friendly, cheerful satellite,
Can it be so, that thou, our comfort giving,
Art bound, a girdling corpse, unto the living?

Over life's feast a sad memento skull
Which mutely speaks in symbol wonderful,
Vanitas vanitatum! all must die,—
Planets, and suns, and moons, and you and I.

J. F. Corkran.

The Tell-Tale.

AN ADDRESS TO CHILDREN.

Do you know what a tell-tale is? If you have ever been to the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, or on to piers at Seaside places, where people go for their summer holidays, you will have had to pass through a kind of gate called a turnstile, through which only one person can pass at a time. And when you have so passed through, you will have heard the click of a spring lever somewhere in the box at the top of the axle of the turnstile. Now, that click was the tongue of the tell-tale, and every time it was heard a number registered itself, so that at the end of the day anybody with the key of the box could ascertain exactly how many people had passed through the turnstile.

In Paris you may see another kind of tell-tale affixed to the omnibuses. It is a sort of clock with a handle, and every time anybody gets into the omnibus the guard is required to turn the handle, which strikes one, like a clock, for every passenger, so that those inside can hear if he registers the right number, and the inspector at the office can see at the end of the journey how many passengers are to be accounted for.

You can see in a moment what such things are wanted for. It is, no doubt, very sad that they should be wanted at all; very sad that all people are not so strictly honest and just that we could all trust one another perfectly. But, seeing that it is not so, and that we are all more or less liable to be tempted to think more of ourselves than of others, and sometimes to use for ourselves what really belongs to others, it is a very good thing to have tell-tales. Some of those people who stand at the turnstile and at the omnibus doors have a great deal of money passing through their hands every day. And unless they are very good and honest people, or have plenty of money of their own (which they very seldom have), it would be a great temptation to some of them sometimes to keep just a little of the money for themselves. A money-taker at a turnstile with a sick wife and a large family, might very easily be tempted to think, when a long doctor's bill came in one day, and he had no money to pay it with, "What if I take a little of the money that passes through my hands every day, till I have paid the bill. I will only take a little; it will never be missed; it will never do anybody any harm. I am very unfortunate. If I don't take it I can never pay the doctor. It can't be very wrong." And so he might begin to take a little, and a little more, till in the end he should come to be a poor hardened thief. So it is well for him that there is a tell-tale to help him to be honest.

I once saw in Manchester a young man yield to such a temptation where there was no tell-tale. It was his duty to mark with a pencil on a paper provided for that purpose and stuck in a case on the door of the omnibus the number of the passengers he had carried. I noticed that he had put down one passenger less than he had actually carried, and that he put down the number—eleven—in a peculiar way thus—1 1 and that he was particularly anxious to hide the paper from me. Fearing that he was meditating further dishonesty I went to his employers and asked to see his paper. I found that on the way to the office he had played a cunning but very dishonest trick. By drawing a line from the bottom of one of the figures through the middle of the other, he had made the eleven into four; thus cheating his employers of the fares of eight passengers. How much better would it have been for him if there had been a tell-tale to have made him afraid of being found out, and so kept him honest in spite of himself. He was very angry with me for telling his employers, but I was not sorry. For I felt that if anybody saw another robbing or cheating me I should wish him to tell me, so I felt I was bound by the golden rule to tell another when I saw anybody robbing him.

Perhaps you are ready to ask me now—but cannot we have a tell-tale for such things? To be sure, we not only can, but we all *have* such a tell-tale, and it is of that I am going to speak to you to-day. But first, just for one minute more, I want you to go with me to the turnstile again. You are going to the Crystal Palace, and are standing at the little narrow space which will only admit one at a time. You put your shilling on the iron box and pass through: click goes the lever in the box, and one more number is registered there, and your shilling will have to be accounted for at night along with everybody else's who has passed through the turnstile to-day.

It is for something like that we are now going to look. But where must we look for it? Well I can hardly tell you where. It is not very easy to find, but I suppose if I can make you hear the click and see the register you will be sure that it is somewhere there. We may as well try and see if we can find it, however, to begin with.

Imagine, then, that some morning when you awake, you find that your eyes, by some strange accident, have been turned round, so that, instead of looking, as now, upon the world outside of you, they can only look within you, and the light comes in through what is now the back of your eyes and lights up all your inner being. What a wonderful being you would feel yourself to be You would be startled and almost frightened to see and hear all that is going on there. It would be like suddenly awaking you out of sleep and carrying you into some vast dark iron foundry, where, in the same spacious shed, there are the furnaces heating the metal, and the moulds, and the castings, and the hammers, and the anvils, and the rollers, and hundreds of toilers at their various work. You can hardly

believe, I dare say, that that quiet body of yours can be anything like such a place as that. But it is so. Although you never hear a sound or feel a movement in it, it is, in truth, one of the busiest workshops in the world. There is more going on there than in the busiest foundry or factory in England. The first thing that would strike you if, as I supposed, your eyes were turned inwards, would be a great red tide going backwards and forwards from your head to your feet, about eighty times a minute. As you watched the course of this tide you would see that it passed through a very wonderful machine called your heart, and that every time it came there it was filtered and supplied afresh with a subtle force which it carried with it to every part of your body. Then you would see a pair of delicately contrived and powerful bellows working at about half the rate of the heart, continually drawing in the air from without you, mingling it with the red tide, burning up all the hurtful things that it had gathered in the body, and blowing them out into the air again; so keeping all pure and sweet and warm. And then you would see another wonderful chamber with honeycombed walls into which all that you eat and drink has to pass, and in which it is all melted down and mingled together until it passes in wonderful streams along many different channels. Some of it goes to make the red tide which is being constantly used up. And some of it goes into chemical fluids to every joint, and wherever such fluids are wanted, and some of it goes as invisible air, full of the mightiest force, up into your brain, and along all your muscles and limbs, and supplies them all with force. And then, when you should look at your brain, what a wonderful thing you would see. Not a particle of it at rest. Itself a wonderful coil of beautiful delicate substance, you would see it every moment changing its colours as different things came to it through your eye or your ear, or from the beautiful workshop within. Whilst a tremendous tide of tremulous force would seem to be pouring from it and spreading itself all over you, controlling all your movements and ways. Is it not then, a wonderful place—that body of yours?

But where is the tell-tale? Ah, my children, I am afraid we shall not find it with our eyes nor with our ears. At least, not in the workshop there. It is quite an invisible tell-tale. And yet it has as real an existence as if it could be handled and felt. I must let you see it at work.

Well, then, we will think of some little boy. Not a wicked boy; mostly a good boy; but not perfectly good and noble and brave and true: who is sometimes tempted to do wrong things, and who is not strong enough always to resist the temptation. On his father's dressing table there stands a beautiful china vase with an exquisite painting on it, at which this little boy is very fond of looking. His father has often told him never to touch it, for fear he should break it: and he values it very much because it has been in his family for more than two hundred years. One day, however, the boy's curiosity was so great that he took it in his hands, with great care, that he might look at it more closely and examine it all over. Whilst he was holding it, however, he heard a door shut down stairs, and fearing to be caught doing what he ought not, he turned to put it back again into its place before anybody could see him; and in his haste he let it fall and broke it into twenty pieces. How his heart leaped into his mouth and almost choked him. What should he do? He knew his father would be more angry with him for doing what he had been told not to do than for breaking the vase. He stole up to his own room and shut himself in and sat down to try and think what he should say. A still small voice within him seemed to say, "Run and meet your father as soon as he comes in, and tell him you did it, and confess it bravely like a man!" But another voice seemed to say, "Why can't you invent an excuse? Say you saw the wind blow the curtain against it and knock it down!" And then he thought of another excuse, and another, and another, and could not tell which was the best. Then he heard his father's step in the hall, and his poor guilty heart began to beat furiously, and he was ready to faint with fear. Will he come up stairs? thought the boy, and he listened—O, how anxiously; but his father did not come. And now the dinner bell rang, and he must go down. He would have given the world not to have to go down, and would joyfully have gone without his dinner; but down he must go. But with such a face and such a heart! "Why! what's the matter?" said his father when he saw him. For his face was all flushed, and he looked so serious, and sad, and full of fear. "Nothing," said the boy, but his face belied him. "I'm sure he has been doing something that he ought not," said his father, or he would never look so. And yet nobody knew he had done wrong. The Tell-tale, you see! *He* knew he had done wrong, though nobody else did; and though he would have given all he had to be able to hide it, he could not. There was something within him that, like a tell-tale, registered the wrong, and marked it up and made it impossible for him to hide it out of sight.

Now then you know what my Tell-tale is, and what is its name—it is Conscience.

I want, if I can, my children, to make you understand something about that wonderful thing which you all have—a Conscience. True, you cannot find it when you look among the organs of your body, as you can find a heart, and an eye, and an ear; but you all have it; and it is one of the most wonderful things about you. Your eye is a very wonderful instrument, holding at one moment all the stars in heaven in its glance, and detecting so accurately all the vari-

ous shades of colour with which the love of God has painted the world; but conscience is a more wonderful endowment still. It has the power of detecting the colour of all your thoughts, and feelings, and words, and deeds as they appear in God's sight, and of letting you know how they look, and so of making you happy and content when you do right, or miserable and ashamed when you do wrong. It is as if you had within you a curious instrument, through which all your life passed—your thoughts, and feelings, and all that makes you speak and act. As long as you are right and good, true and honest, the little instrument, like a musical box, plays pleasant tunes and makes sweet music at your heart, whose pleasantness spreads to your face and makes you look happy. But when you are evil and sinful and even *wish* to do wrong things, then all the music is changed into a harsh clicking and clanging that jars upon your heart, and makes your cheeks burn with shame and your face sad with fear.

And why, think you, have we been made to have such a wonderful thing about us as this Conscience? It has been placed within us by the same kind heavenly Father who gave us the wonderful eye for the beautiful world, and the wonderful ear for the lovely music and the loving speech. It is because God wants us to be happy, because he knows we cannot be happy if we are not good. So He has put that wonderful faculty —Conscience—within us to help us to be good and happy; to make us ashamed and miserable when we do wrong, and so to make us afraid when we do wrong, and to make us happy, and glad, and strong when we do right, and so make us anxious always to do right.

And now I must tell you something more about the wonderful way in which this thing acts. I will suppose, for example, that one of you, impressed with what I am saying to you now, shall begin to-day to listen constantly for the musical voice of conscience within you, and try to keep the music always going; as soon as ever you hear the faintest click or clang you leave off doing what provokes it; whenever the music stops you ask yourself what is the matter; if you are in doubt about a thing whether it is right or wrong, you pass it through conscience and see whether it makes music or harshness, if you do this you will grow up to be one of the bravest, noblest, most beautiful men or women in the world; afraid of nothing but wrong and sin; not afraid of God, nor of death, nor of the judgment, nor of all the wickedness of men. Afraid of nothing but sin. You will get so to see and know what right is, and so to love it, that you will be always doing it, and so you will be always enjoying the richest joy, and acquiring the greatest honour in the world. "*The righteous is bold as a lion,*" says Solomon, and you will find it to be true. And men will honour, and love, and trust you. They will know that it is impossible for you to do wrong if you know it, and that will be greater honour for you than if they should clothe you in cloth of gold and set you on a horse and blow a trumpet before you to announce your greatness. "*A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold.*" (Proverbs xxii. 1.)

But suppose that one of you should do the other thing, and instead of heeding the voice of his conscience shall begin to resist it, not to mind what it says when it speaks, never to heed the click and the clang of the tell-tale, but shall say "who cares; what if it is wrong, if I'm not found out I don't care; what's wrong? I'll do what I like." Why, I will tell you what will become of him. He will be like a man beginning to run down a very steep mountain with a precipice beneath. At first he runs so gently that he could stop at any moment; by and by he will go a little faster and a little faster, until at last he will be unable to stop, and his own force will hurry him to the precipice, where he will be dashed to pieces. He will begin not to be ashamed of doing wrong, so he will not be afraid to do it. And then as he grows older and has greater wants he will do greater wrong, and be unable to stop himself, and lose his self-control and the respect of men, and when he dies nobody will see anything but a black mark upon his grave.

So, my children, if you would like to live good, and pleasant, and noble lives, you must take care and keep the tell-tale in good order.

What things I have seen the tell-tale do. I have seen a boy whistling along the street and trying to look innocent, but every now and then he would anxiously turn and look behind him with a look of fear, and fear has blanched his face. There needed nobody to tell that he had been doing wrong. The tell-tale told it, and hung it on his face. I have seen a number of children together, questioned as to some mischief that one of them had done, and there was no need to ask who had done it. There stood the culprit, all suffused with shame and with hang-dog look of guilt that was more than any denial or confession could be.

There have been men who have done great wickedness, whose life has been one continued misery of fear lest they should be found out. They have made themselves rich by their wickedness, but have had no enjoyment of it, for the horrible fear of disgrace that haunted them night and day. All through the tell-tale! Of the faces that you meet in the streets there are always some that look haggard, and worn, and sad. And this is not always through misfortune. A good deal of it is the work of the tell-tale; they have a perpetual worry to hide up the wrong of their lives, and a perpetual fear lest it should break out.

And now, shall I tell you how to keep the tell-tale in order? I likened it a little while since to a musical box. Have you ever seen the inside

of a musical box? If so, you have seen a metal comb with teeth of different length, whose vibrations make the music. And you have seen a barrel with a spring in it, all covered over with little steel pins, which catch the edge of the teeth as the barrel goes round, and set them vibrating. Well now, if one of you should begin to despise the voice of your conscience, and not to care about right and wrong, every time you do it, it will be like breaking off one of those metal teeth, so that it can never make music again. And, as you go on, you will break off another, until the tell-tale will not only lose all its power to make music when you do right, but also will lose its power to make warning when you do wrong. And, O, my children, when that happens you are in a terrible case. You will have nothing to keep you from running to ruin. You will be running down to the precipice with nothing to lay hold of to stop you from death.

So, if you would keep the beautiful tell-tale in order, you must always heed its voice.

The musical box wants winding up you know. So does the tell-tale. How can you wind up the tell-tale? Very easily indeed. Pray to God every day to teach you what is right and good, and to help you to do it, and every word of your prayer will be a turn of the key that winds up the tell-tale to help you to the good, and the beautiful, and the happy, and the true.

G. C.

Sunday School Lesson.

V.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

LESSON TEXT.—"Jesus said, John baptised with water, but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Spirit."—*Acts xi., 16.*

A voice by Jordan's shore,
A summons stern and clear;
Reform be just, and sin no more,
God's judgment draweth near!
A voice by Galilee,
A holier voice I hear:
Love God! thy neighbour love, for, see,
God's mercy draweth near.

SAMUEL LONGFELLOW.

I. THE EVENT.

We must remember that the rite of bathing and baptism was old among the Jews. We find it in the customs of nations of the East, where the conditions of weather and habits of life are so different from our own cold climate. John the Baptist adopted this custom in connection with his mission. Dean Stanley has given a strong picture, and we take the substance of it. No one has painted scenes of this kind so well. These transactions take place in our day at Easter time. The pilgrims go by night with torches, and blazing watch-fires break the darkness of the night. At sunrise the throng is at the bank of the Jordan. All make ready in one way and another to plunge into the sacred river. Some are very bold and go far out, and others tarry near the bank. Men and women, children, and even infants, receive this immersion. It is an exciting scene, but everything is conducted with seriousness. In about two hours the shores are clear, the travellers remount their camels and horses, and camp once more on the upper plain of Jericho. Then, at the dead of night, they take up their homeward march. To help us to a still better understanding of what baptism meant in the old days, let us call up another scene in the early Christian centuries. At midnight, in a place called Baptistery, consisting of two chambers, inner and outer, the converts were assembled for immersion. In the outer chamber they prepared; and, turning to the west, they reached out their hands and said, as though speaking to the evil one, "I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy works, and all thy pomp, and all thy service." Then, turning, they repeated some words of Christian faith, and went forward into the inner chamber. There into a deep pool they plunged, everything being done in good order and with propriety. Before and after the baptism they were anointed with oil from head to foot, and at the end were robed in white gowns. With these pictures before us, let us think of John the Baptist and the multitude coming to him. Many of these converts were sincere, many frightened, many doing this because others did. We read in the Gospels that Jesus came, and was baptised by the rugged herald of the new kingdom. There are some strange and wonderful things told of this event. The chief fact for us to lay hold of is that Jesus was immersed by John the Baptist in Jordan when Jesus was about thirty years old, as near as we can judge, and left the obscurity of the life in Galilee.

II.—ITS MEANING TO JESUS.

Looking back from where we stand to-day, it is plain to see that Jesus was drawn toward John the Baptist, and desired to relate his future work to the symbol and spirit of the hermit of the wilderness. It might be asked, Why should Jesus go to John? He had no need of any support such as the Baptist could give. It is not easy to answer this, but let us judge by what Jesus always did when we can see him clearly at work. The great Teacher always aimed to fulfil; that is, he did not come to destroy, but to complete, and he was always anxous to show to the people this purpose. We shall see in future lessons how he answered sharp lawyers and shrewd foes. He saw that, to give to the world a religion which should be universal, he must include the truth that had gone before. Forms were to him of value, but only as they served an idea. Jesus adopted the rite of baptism or immersion as a token of discipleship. It was an old custom, as we have said; but he

saw in it a personal vow which every one was to make as proof of a desire to enter into the kingdom of heaven. In other words, the rite was carried up into a spiritual meaning. Beside this, Jesus no doubt wished to show that he had entered upon his work. The baptism at Jordan marked the opening chapter.

III.—Baptism as a Form.

It is the oldest ceremony that Christianity has. It has been looked at honestly and differently by various sects. The majority of Christians do not now practice immersion. The meaning of it has also undergone great changes; and whether by sprinkling or plunging, whether for infant or adult, the main understanding among Christians is that it indicates a change or a consecration. The lesson text declares there is a baptism of the Holy Ghost, as the Gospels say, contrasting it with the baptism by water of John.

IV.—The Highest Meaning.

We see how the same symbol of baptism meant different things to the two. And this is true of every form that is used in Christian churches. For some they are restraints, and stand for fear: to others they are open doors, and invitations to true liberty. Baptism or christening is beautiful: it tells of purity and hope, new life, and nobler duties.

V.—Class Talks.

In what different ways is baptism observed? Is there a sect of this name, and how do they carry out this rite? Do you think that Jesus intended the custom to last always? What is christening? What does water mean as a symbol? Do you suppose that the water makes a real change? Is the "dove" a picture or a real fact? When a life is written many, many years after the events described, are there not always some changes and additions made? Is it not possible to say that things happened without intending to misstate facts? Ought we not to remember always that the biographies of Jesus were written from oral accounts, and coloured by loving but imperfect writers? Would they not be likely to put in supernatural stories, because they believed in wonders?

VI.—Lesson Topics and Review.

I. Habits in the East.
II. Value of forms.
III. Meaning of baptism.
IV. Why Jesus went to John.
V. The fact and the after stories.
VI. Difference between John and Jesus.
VII. Beginning of Jesus' public life.

VII.—Suggestions to Teachers and References.

Deal carefully, but clearly, with the records. Leave the scholar in full and reverent possession of the inner facts. See Dean Stanley, "Christian Institutions," *Baptism;* also, "Ecce Homo," *The Baptist* and *Baptism.*

Guild News.

A brief account of the Mansford Street Guilds' successful attempt to form a "Reading Circle" may encourage others to make a similar effort, to be followed by even better results.

The Warden suggested the formation of such a circle at the annual meeting in September; a plan of action was decided upon, and advantage was taken of the first devotional meeting, when the subject of "Religious reading" was being discussed, to rouse enthusiasm and sell twenty-four sixpenny copies of Mr. Armstrong's "God and the Soul." The meetings that followed were quite distinct from the monthly devotional meetings of the Guild. A table will show the ground they covered at a glance.

Subject.	No. of Meet'gs.	Av. attend.
God and the Soul.....	5	11
Emerson's Essays	5	14
Macbeth	4	20

This looks healthy, but to realize any of the keenness of the pleasure of the partakers, or to grasp the extent of the enlightenment to be derived from a friendly tossing to and fro of differing opinion, one must visit our minister's study whilst the Circle is in action. Our chief care has been that it should be *alive*, and the raid just made upon Ruskin's "Sesame and Lilies" for September use, is eloquent of future life.

Cheap editions of the best literature favour all who wish to work in this direction. There cannot exist a Guild possessing *no* members with a leaning towards such mental fare. Let us say to ourselves, "If we work intelligently, and together, we shall win." We shall have to remember that the best food sometimes needs a little relish with it before it can stimulate an indifferent appetite. Our biscuits must be crisp.

Here we observed one or two small necessities for which we were amply repaid. There should be no flagging. Whatever subject arose (had it been Kant's "transcendental unity of apperception," its fate had been the same) three of us were determined to keep the ball rolling. Whilst a distinct end was kept in view, there was infinite variety in unity, and interest was sustained throughout. We never closed a meeting without knowing when the next would be, and what it would do, everyone helping to make the decision. One complaint, or rather two, we have had. Mothers complained at sons and daughters having a mania which kept them at the Mission until eleven o'clock at night, so that discussion had to be limited to two hours, eight to ten; and members complained at closing it during the summer months. It was pointed out that for the sake of its health this was necessary, and that it was no reason why individual members should not continue their reading, if they really desired it.

One dare not speak here of the actual methods adopted in tackling the different subjects. It is something to know that with a taste for good reading and an enlarged mental experience, many of our members are forming the nucleus of what may become a helpful little home library.

ALFRED THOMPSON,
Hon. Guild Sec.

News from the Field.

All our friends, or nearly all, are holidaying—some are on the seas in Continental lands prior to the Geneva Conference—some by the encompassing shores of the British Isles; and others by hill, and stream, and dell, so that the tides of life are low and calm, and there is little to record of activity and enterprise.

One of our Ministers has accepted a call to the Isle of Wight—the *Rev. H. M. Livens* goes to *Newport*. At this season of the year who would not go there? and the place and people are a continual attraction. The post is one for a Poet, and the New Minister will be in his right place.

The oldest worker among us—the *Rev. Iden Payne*, has laid down his Ministry at *Stanington*, and his friends there have taken affectionate leave of him, and given him a parting blessing and a cheque for *£247 7s.*, with the assurance of a small annual sum till the end of his life, and also to his venerable wife. This is as it should be.

Mr. Spedding and his friends in the Missionary Conference—in no sense deterred by adverse criticisms—are about to send forth their Missionary Van among the people with its message of the Love of God and Man, and they are hopeful it will bring joy to many troubled souls. Who would check such an earnest enterprise? Whatever the name of this van, its message is catholic, and peaceful.

At *Windermere* summer services are being held. Influential people come, and the enterprise is being generously maintained. Other Mission Stations are quietly at work.

It is gratifying to find that our friends at *Birkenhead* are able to report that their debt—on their pleasant place of worship—is swept away, and that their hearts are full of thankfulness to all who have helped to bring about such a happy state of things.

Oldbury is being stirred up to put a new organ into the Chapel, in memory of their late Pastor, the *Rev. Henry McKean*. It is pleasing to know that their recent sale of work and garden party have united to give substantial aid in this enterprise. They are sure to succeed.

Quite a crowd of Free Religious Thinkers are drawing from all parts of the world, notably from the United Kingdom, and the United States of America towards *Geneva* for the great Conference to be held there. There will be large and happy meetings. The languages will be many and varied, but the spirit will be one, and the influence of the gathering will be for the advancement of the world. Some of the travellers may tell the story in our next issue.

It will be gratifying to our readers to know that *Mr. Street* and his friends have had a generous response to the appeal they have made on behalf of the widow and children of the late *Rev. Arthur Haron*. The sum raised, so far, is, perhaps, not as large as is needed but it is sufficient to show a widespread kindness of heart which tells that our people are not unmindful of brave and earnest workers, or of those who are left behind to suffer and to mourn.

The tale of death is not so extensive as it sometimes is, but our records tell of the loss we have sustained by the removal from our midst of two devoted laymen, *Dr. Davies*, of *Gateshead*, and *W. Lewin* of *Birkenhead*, both notable and useful in their several ways, and of one of our Ministers, the *Rev. A. B. Hamilton*, of *Banbridge*, *Ireland*, a convert from the *Presbyterian* (Orthadox) body, and a minister in our ranks for many years. These and others have entered the veil, and gone to their reward, leaving behind fragrant and happy memories.

SCRUTATOR.

Aug. 16th, 1905.

Life is joy, and love is power,
Death all fetters doth unbind;
Strength and Wisdom only flower
When we toil for all our kind.
Hope is Truth:—the Future giveth
More than Present takes away;
And the soul for ever liveth
Nearer God from day to day.

J. R. LOWELL.

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